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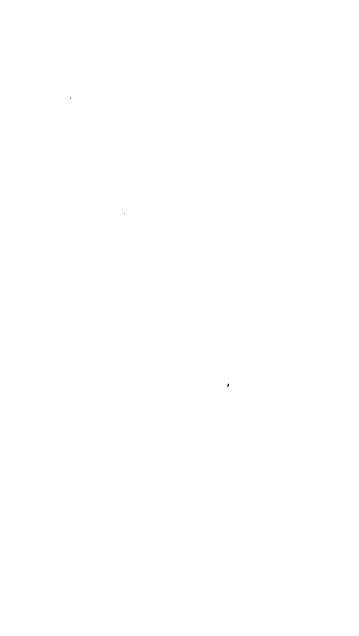
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Gratis









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LYCIDAS

Lycidas

BY

JOHN MILTON

LONDON

298 REGENT STREET W

Grai



In this Monody, the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, Q ye laurels.

and once more

Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,

And with forced fingers rude, Shatter your leaves before the

mellowing year.

Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,

Compels me to disturb your season due:

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,

Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:

Who would not sing for Lycidas?
He knew

- nself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
- e must not float upon his watery bier
- Jnwept, and welter to the parching wind,
- Without the meed of some melodious tear.
 - Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,
- That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
- Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
- Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse.
- So may some gentle Muse
- With lucky words favour my destined urn,

And as he passes turn,

And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,

Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.

Together both, ere the high lawns appeared

Under the opening eyelids of the morn,

We drove a field, and both together heard

What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,

Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,

Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright,

c 13

they were with

Toward heav'n's descent had slop'd his west'ring wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,

Tempere

n flute,

Rough !

with

and Fauns

From the glad sound would not be absent long,

And old Damætas loved to hear our song.

But Oh, the heavy change, now thou art gone,

Now thou art gone, and never must return!

Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves

With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,

And all their echoes mourn.

The willows, and the hazel copses green,

Shall now no more be seen

Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

As killing as the canker to the rose,

Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,

Or frost to flow'rs, that their gay wardrobe wear,

When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas? For 1 ther were ye playing on steep,

Where your old Bards, the famous

Nor c

op of Mona

Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:

Ay me! I fondly dream!

Had ye been there, for what could that have done?

What could the Muse herself that .
Orpheus bore,

The Muse herself for her enchanting son,

Whom universal nature did lament,

When by the rout that made the hideous roar,

His gory visage down the stream was sent,

Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care

To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,

And strictly meditate the thank-

Were it not better done, as others

use,

To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,

Or with the tangles of Neæra's

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise

(That last infirmity of noble mind) To scorn delights, and live labo-

rious days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,

And think to burst out into sudden blaze,

Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears,

And slits the thin-spun life.—But not the praise,

Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears;

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,

Nor in the glis'tring foil

Set off to th' world, nor in broad

rumour lies:

But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,

And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;

Of so much fame in heav'n expect thy meed.

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,

Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,

That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

But now my oat proceeds,

And listens to the herald of the

That came in Neptune's plea;

- He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
- What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
- And questioned every gust of rugged wings
- That blows from off each beaked promontory:
- They knew not of his story,
- And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
- That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed,
- The air was calm, and on the level brine
- Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
- It was that fatal and perfidious bark,

Built in th' eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,

That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,

His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,

Inwrought with figures dim, and and on the edge

Like to that sanguine flow'r in-.
scribed with woe.

Ah! who hath reft (quoth he) www.

Last came, and last did go,

The pilot of the Galilean lake;

Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,

ne golden opes, the iron shuts

Ie shook his mitted locks, and stern bespake,

How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,

Enow of such as for their bellies'

Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold?

Of other care they little reckoning

Than how to scramble at the

shearer's feast, And shove away the worthy bidden guest;

Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold 22

- A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
- That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
- What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
- And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
- Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
- The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
- But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
- Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
- Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw

- Daily devours apace, and nothing said;
- But that two-handed engine at the door
- Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.
 - Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
- That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
- And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
- Their bells, and flow'rets of a thousand hues.
- Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
- Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,

- On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks:
- Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
- That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
- And purple all the ground with yernal flowers.
- Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
- The tufted crow-toe, and pale iessamine,
- The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
- The glowing violet,
- The <u>musk-rose</u>, and the <u>well-</u> attired woodbine,
- With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,

D 25

2 Read it works



And every flower that sad embroidery wears:

Bid marantus all his beauty shed, And their cups with

To strow the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.

For so to interpose a little ease,

Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.

Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled,

Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,

Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide

- Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
- Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
- Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old.
- Where the great vision of the guarded mount
- Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
- Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
- And, O ye dolphins, wast the

hapless youth. Weep no more, woeful Shep-

herds, weep no more,

For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,

- Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
- So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
- And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
- And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
- Flames in the forehead of the morning sky;
- So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
- Thro' the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
- Where other groves, and other streams along,
- With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,

- And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
- In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
- There entertain him all the saints above,
- In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
- That sing, and singing in their glory move,
- And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
- Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
- Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
- In thy large recompense, and shalt be good

To all that wander in that pera z. ous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,

While the still morn went out with sandals gray,

. He touched the tender stops of various quills,

With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;

And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,

And now was dropt into the western bay;

At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:

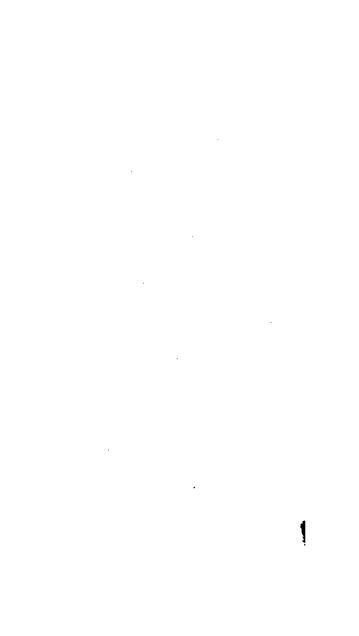
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

1 Done lay

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